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VARIA DIOCLETIANEA*

UDK: 728.8(497.5 Split)

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Dedicated to the memory of Mladen Pejaković,
the man who solved the secret of light

Πρὸ τῆς νουμηνίας, εὐθέως μετὰ τὸν τελευταῖον τοῦ Κρόνου μῆνα, ποιοῦμεν Ἡλίῳ τὸν περιφανέστατον ἀγῶνα τὴν ἑορτὴν Ἡλίῳ καταφημίσαντες ἀνικήτῳ, μεθ᾽ ὃν οὐδὲν θέμις ὧν ὁ τελευ ταῖος μὴν ἔχει σκυθρωπῶν μέν, ἀναγκαίων δὲ ὅμως, ἐπιτελεσθῆναι θεαμάτων, ἀλλὰ τοῖς Κρονίοις οὖσι τελευ ταίοις εὐθὺς συνάπτει κατὰ τὸν κύκλον τὰ Ἥλια.	*Before the year begins, at the end of the month named after Chronos, we celebrate the most splendid games in honor of Helios and we dedicate the festival to the Invincible Sun.* *Moreover, it is not lawful to perform any of the shows that belong to the last month, gloomy as they are.* *In the cycle following the end of the Chronia follows the Heliaia.*

Julian the Apostate (332-363 AD). Orations (Speeches), IV: Hymn to King Helios

XXI, 6. Quibus hac dies (25th of Dec.) non tam de nativitate Christi quam de novi, ut dicunt Solis ortu honorabilis videtur.	*21.6. This day (25th of Dec.) seems honorable not so much for the nativity of Christ as, so they say, for the rising of the new Sun.*

Leo the Great (5th century AD), Sermons

* The conclusions about Diocletian's palace, the earlier history and religious continuity of the site, unsolved problems of Aspalathos' topography and the true purpose of the monument. The text is expanded and fully annotated version of the presentation held in Split on the 25th of September, 2005.

I THE DREAM

The Tetrarchy, the governing system established by the Roman emperor Diocletian, gave the new impetus for Roman art and architecture. The distribution of power among the tetrarchs resulted in the building of several imperial residences and tombs. The oriental influence became prominent in Diocletian's court as well as in courts of other emperors of the time, and the palatial architecture subsequently underwent changes following this influence. Towards the end of the third century AD, following the reform of religious policy brought by Diocletian, successive emperors had promoted the worship of Sol Invictus as a unifying theme of the empire. Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, Maxentius and Constantius all became associated not only with the principal gods of the Roman Pantheon, but also with the cult of Sol Invictus, already established by Aurelian. Ever since, they have been worshiped as the sons of gods. A series of special monuments was built in honor of the tetrarchs. The first and most important was *Decenallia*, columns on Forum Romanum in Rome, followed by other monuments and palaces in tetrarchs' capitals. In order to preserve their glory, immediately after their ascension, the tetrarchs planned to build palaces with monumental burial complexes for their retirement. However, only some of them lived long enough to begin this endeavor, while Diocletian was the only one who actually lived and died in his residence as he had planned.

Diocletian's palace in Split represents a masterpiece of palatial architecture of the late Roman Empire. Although we don't know who built it, the name of Libonus, the architect famous for the building of the imperial palace in Antioch (now sunken in mud of the Orontes' delta), comes to mind due to many similarities in the plans of both palaces. According to contemporary sources, the plan of the palace in Antioch included two main streets with the ceremonial complex at the end of decumanus, while the emperor's residence was situated further inwards.[1] It is also possible that the building of both palaces was planned simultaneously,

[1] Libanius: *Orations*, XI 204-207, gives the following description of the palace complex: »The complete [palace] is built according to a precise plan, with continuous wall surrounding it like a crown. From the [center], four arches joined in the form of quadrangle [tetrapylon] and four pairs of stoas [streets flanked with colonnades] proceed to the four quarters of glory. Three of these [streets] run as far as the walls and then merge, while the fourth one is shorter, but more beautiful because it leads to the palace and serves as its entrance. The palace occupies the fourth part of the whole [island]«. According to Libanius, a kind of promenade, possibly a cryptoportic was placed on the upper part of the facade that overlooked the river. Judging by the scarce remains, it is obvious that two main streets formed four main sectors of the palace that were surrounded by walls. There are striking similarities with the conception and plan of the palace in Split – a prolonged street serving as the entrance part of the ceremonial complex, analogue with the Split Peristyle, together with two possible temenos areas, and emperor's residence at the end of this prolonged street. More about the plan, in: Mac Donald (1986), 23.

one started within a few years of the other. The architecture of the palace in Split displays a rare blend of various influences and functions that resulted in a splendid building: a combination of North Africa's »*gasr*«, Roman military camps, monumental maritime villas, early Roman villas, religious monuments and memorials to the Tetrarchy, all incorporated in a luxurious residence and the burial place of the retired Emperor. Thus, the palace remains a unique building, though the idea of the fortified imperial palace with the memorial was repeated, with much less success, in Gamzigrad and Šarkamen, while the villa in Mogorjelo was a purely private enterprise dictated by the uneasy military situation in Illyria. Although it seems that Roman emperors eventually abandoned the idea of a palace within a fortified enclosure, it actually continued to live in the series of lavish desert castles built by Umayyad caliphs in Jordan. However, these later objects were only reflections of emperor's wish to live in security and without any religious symbolism, although their decoration and lavishness has often surpassed the Roman tradition. While most of the late antique Roman palaces and villas perished in the fires of the destruction of the Roman Empire, in the tragic *Götterdämmerung* of late antiquity, Diocletian's palace continued to live through medieval and later times. This palace is the one last great achievement of Roman architecture, never surpassed, as well as a lasting memorial of its owner and his governing system.

II ASPALATHOS

Even from the start of the scientific research of Diocletian's palace in Split, it was evident that its carefully prepared plan had several irregularities as the results of changes imposed due to natural difficulties encountered on the building site.[2] At the same time, it was believed that the already existing Roman centuriation of the Split peninsula was totally abandoned by the architect of Diocletian's palace in order to obtain a position where constructing the palace would be easier. However, the ultimate location was selected for completely different and more important reasons. It was partly imposed by the religious importance of earlier structures on the site, which had to be respected during the building of the palace, as well as by the specific needs of the position of the building, which were required by the true

[2] For a long time it was believed that the deviations were imposed due to the presence of the protruding mass of bedrock on the planned site of the NE tower, which had to be placed further to the west, which in turn resulted with a series of modifications to the already prepared plans. Thus, for example, central transition hall 11a and the building in the NE quarter are the most obvious examples of adaptations of the rectangular plan into the parallelogram. It is important to note that these adaptations were executed in such a manner that the deviations from a 90° angle were visible as little as possible. About these modifications of the plan see J. Marasović (1977), 87.

idea of the palace. Insight into the earliest history of Split is the key towards the better understanding of the true purpose and meaning of the palace.

Tabula Peuntegeriana gives evidence for the presence of urban agglomeration in Aspalathos, somewhere between Salona and Epetium,[3] on the Split peninsula. However, Tabula does not give any more details, save the name. The position drawn on the Tabula was at first interpreted as the village on the road crossing of Salona and Epetium. Some of the scholars have deduced that Aspalathos was actually located in the area today called Manuš.[4] Due to the absence of any graphic representation of Aspalathos on Tabula, the general opinion of later times was that there was only a small group of houses deep in the cove, a kind of shipmen's retreat or a village. It is generally believed that Diocletian's palace had simply razed and overbuilt whatever Aspalathos was.

We now know that Aspalathos was not the first agglomeration in this area because a number of prehistoric settlements throughout the peninsula preceded it. It is known that a series of prehistoric fortresses »gradinas« existed in the area of modern day Split, the most important of which was located in the area of Gripe.[5] The area was also inhabited in the pre-Hellenic period with a number of settlements of the local tribe Delmati. However, until recently there was practically no evidence for the position and the character of the Hellenic urban agglomeration of Aspalathos which is known that have existed somewhere in the Split bay.

The first archaeological indication for the presence of some kind of Hellenic agglomeration was the discovery of a few Hellenic inscriptions during the excavations executed for the railway in 1880s,[6] which cut through the very city center of Split. These, unfortunately lost, inscriptions indicated the possibility that the colonists from Issa (Vis) had founded Aspalathos.[7]

This leaves the question of why the agglomeration was founded on this particular location, despite the fact that bigger Hellenic cities (Salonae and Epetion) were already founded nearby. Also, was Aspalathos the first settlement in this place, or was it preceded by some earlier cultures? It is highly unlikely that a place with such natural advantages was not inhabited much earlier.

This bay, as well as the whole shore between cape Ad Dianam and Epetium, has a particularly mild climate and geological and hydrological features important for the inhabitants and their everyday life in the area. The flysch structures – almost vertical layers of limestone and bluish marl – were found all along the coast of the Split peninsula. Because of the impermeability of the marl layers, a series of fresh water springs appear in contact with the limestone; some of them underwater, some

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[3] *Monumenta cartographica Yugoslavica* I, Pl. I.

[4] Buškariol (1984), with a survey of the earlier discoveries and the analysis of earlier publications regarding Aspalathos.

[5] Information supplied by Marijan Lozo.

[6] Novak (1957), 13-18.

[7] *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* II, 984, no 1830b, 1830c.

on the sea level and some higher up the slope, depending on the configuration of flysch structures. Up until recently, many of these springs and short streams have been visible along the coast between the cape of Marjan and Stobreč (Epetion). Unfortunately, only a few of them are visible today, due to expansion of the city and permanent devastation of the coast.[8] Thus, the present day toponimes related to the presence of the water, have a long tradition in the popular history of Split.[9]

However, another natural feature was also very important for the foundation of any settlements that preceded Aspalathos on this site: the presence of several springs of mineral sulfurous hot water in the deepest part of the cove, very close to the area on which Diocletian's Palace was built.[10] These springs were used for health treatments during the Illyrian period, and it was possible that, even then, there was some kind of sanctuary in the area. A shrine from such an early period was probably dedicated to Asclepius whose cult was worshiped through a long period during the Illyrian rule of Dalmatia.[11] Among other early cults, it should be noted that the cult of Magna Mater was widely spread in the area of the Split peninsula and its presence was constant until the time of Diocletian.

III SALONAE

Religious continuity of the site certainly existed during Hellenic and later Roman ruling of the region. Thus, the bigger sanctuary, together with various curing facilities, most probably dedicated to Asclepius (later Aesculap), surely replaced the previous one. In Roman times, the agglomeration Aspalathos obviously became known as a part of the wider toponyme Salonae, which included several inhabited

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[8] Thus, the whole coast between Duilovo and Trstenik is completely covered with often illegally dumped material, mostly rubble, and in some areas, the present coast is located approximately 100 – 150 m further in the former sea basin.

[9] Petrić (1982); Many of the natural features along the coast, which were recorded as late as 1980, are not visible anymore, mostly because of later development, or in many cases, deliberately uncontrolled environmental destruction of the coast. All the sites that were present until the development of the wider area of Split are listed in this work. A great number of sites, related to appearance of the water, existed on both the eastern and western coast. Most important toponyms are »Radoševac« (stream), »Trstenik« (cove), »Rukavac«, »Vodice«, »Vele Vodice«, »Male Vodice« (springs) etc…

[10] These springs of sulfurous water are still active. Some of them are located under the palace of Split baths, ~ 200 m to the west of the palace, while others are located ~ 400 m to the southwest of the palace. They were known as »Piškera« because they were used as the place where women from Split washed their laundry. Up until recently, a very strong odor from these springs has constantly been present near the sea in the area.

[11] Stipčević (1989), 68.

settlements near Hellenic Salona.[12] It is well known that Romans usually built spas near garrisons wherever possible, while curing facilities placed near thermal springs were ideal for military spas. Two aqueducts were built in the 1st century; one for the supply of the Urbs Salona, and other, with a much bigger capacity, for the supply of Aspalathos, whose position was ideal for a military spa because of the constant supply of thermal sulfurous water and the presence of curative mud. Consequently, the only reason for building the aqueduct with such large capacity was the need for permanent supply of the various spa installations, as well as for many private, luxurious villas that certainly had some kind of thermal facilities.[13] It is very likely that the owners of these villas were prominent individuals. The expansion of the agglomeration, after the first objects were built around the spa facilities, was extended further towards the coast.[14] It is possible that the aqueduct had several branches built for the supply of these private villas. It is not known what was actually built, and what formed the spa complex, but according to the topographic characteristics of the terrain, it is most likely that these buildings were built in a wider area, at least between the shore and the *Ad basilicas pictas* site. It is important to note that recently, during communal works on the streets surrounding the *Ad basilicas pictas* site, fragments of various structures with pools, big columns and thick walls were discovered.[15] They might belong either to some villas, or to bath facilities built in the area. In the 3rd century AD, the aqueduct that supplied villas and spas was certainly reconstructed and extended towards the newly built palace and Diocletian's private vegetable gardens that, supposedly, existed somewhere nearby.[16]

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[12] The usual interpretation for the plural »Salonae« was the division into *Urbs vetus*, *Urbs occidentalis* and *Urbs orientalis*. Obviously, this plural should include localities in the wider area, such as the agglomeration and fortress on the »Rupotine« site, agglomeration today known as Vranjic, other locations further towards the Klis passage, and Aspalathos as well. Nenad Cambi discussed the problem of multi-agglomeration Salonae; Introduction in: Antička Salona, Split, 1990.

[13] Remains of various lavish residences have surfaced on various occasions in the wider area of Manuš.

[14] According to results of excavations and accidental finds in the area between the coast and the *Ad Basilicas pictas* site, it is obvious that various structures were built, scattered throughout the whole area. Actually, the complete Split peninsula probably had various villas, economies and other buildings distributed along the centuriation, while the core of Aspalathos was located around spa facilities in the area of Manuš.

[15] The complete finds were never published. Buškariol (1984) gives the summary of the finds until 1984, while further finds are published summarily in *Aqueduct* and *Ad basilicas pictas*.

[16] The widely known story from 308 AD, relates to Diocletian's refusal to return to the throne. In his reply to his co-emperor Maximianus, Diocletian said, »*If you could see the cabbage that I am personally growing near my palace in Split, you would know that I don't have any interest to return*«. For possible use of the aqueduct as a water supply for Diocletian's garden, see: Grgurević (2002), 15-18.

The area, which surrounds Diocletian's palace, was archaeologically investigated only sporadically, either accidentally during foundation excavations for various buildings, or during the rescue excavations held throughout a very long period. Fragments of different ancient structures were discovered on various occasions, but practically no thorough scientific research was conducted on any of these sites during the 19th and the most part of the 20th century. Unfortunately, majority of the finds of all these excavations remained unpublished.

The first important object, which was excavated more systematically, was the site known as »Ad basilicas pictas«. Although circular walls were for the first time spotted during excavations of the foundation for construction of the city's water system in 1880s,[17] this locality was, for the first time, partly excavated back in 1957.[18] However, more thorough excavations were conducted in the 1990s, but only a fraction of the object was excavated, and the finds were wrongly interpreted as the remains of a Roman »Odeon«.[19] Unfortunately, the available documentation is for a good part inconclusive, while the published reconstructions of the ground plan are very tentative. It must be noted, that the proposed »Odeon« does not resemble any known ground plan of any other known Odeon. The reconstruction would be impossible for several reasons; statically, the discovered foundations cannot bear the load of the superstructure of the cavea. No trace of any superstructure was discovered on the site at all, and it would be impossible to roof the building in any architecturally logical way.[20] Although no satisfactory explanation of the function and architecture of the object discovered on the »Ad basilicas pictas« site, has been published so far, the immense uproar that followed the works was only used for unscientific and sensationalistic press campaigns in order to promote false ideas about the existence and nature of the agglomeration, which preceded Split.[21]

However, the key to the function of this building was at hand for a very long time. In the sixties, during the earlier excavation campaign of the ground floor of Diocletian's palace, the first architectural fragments of earlier structures were discovered.[22] More fragments of the eastern part of the ground floors were found

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[17] Piplović (1999), 692.

[18] Without definitive publication of the finds.

[19] Despite the archaeological supervision, the mosaics discovered in 1957 were destroyed during the machine digging on the site. Their remains are visible in published profiles in *Ad basilicas pictas* catalogue.

[20] Piplović (1999) first wrote about the discrepancy between the finds and the proposed reconstructions.

[21] The promoter of this campaign was journalist Damir Šarac, with a series of sensationalistic articles published in newspapers *Slobodna Dalmacija*.

[22] Reported in Marasović (1961-1962): »Pregled radova Urbanističkog biroa na istraživanju, zaštiti i uređenju Dioklecijanove palače u Splitu«, *URBS* 4, 23-54; Split, 1961-1962, 24, 30.

during excavations conducted in the nineties.[23] All these fragments were interpreted as remains of the building replaced by the palace itself. Preliminary examination of these architectural fragments, as well as the settings of their discovery, together with examination of the published plans of the so-called Odeon, brought out the following conclusions:

The notion of the Odeon should be dismissed in its entirety. The published reconstruction of the plan has no similarity to any known Odeon plans discovered so far; the roofing of this building, as well as its construction, would have had serious faults. On the other hand, the nature of the finds, the quality of construction techniques and the number of dislocated architectural elements discovered under the foundations of Diocletian's palace, indicate that they could belong to a monumental building on the *Ad basilicas pictas* site. The building might have been a part of the spa complex. This idea was supported by the discovery of parts of a well-organized canal system among the building foundations. The discovery of emperor Traianus' coins among the foundations of his monumental building gives better evidence for its dating.

Unfortunately, although the possible connection of architectural fragments discovered under Diocletian's palace and the remains at the *Ad basilicas pictas* site was mentioned much earlier, no one has yet attempted to produce a reliable reconstruction of the possible appearance of this building.[24] The imposing architectural fragments discovered under the walls of Diocletian's palace have not yet been published with all detailed measurements and drawings. All these architectural elements which could also date from the 1st century, were discovered in the infill of the foundations of Diocletian's palace. Judging by their stylistic features, these elements are similar to the remains of the Roman theater in Salona, also built during the reign of Traianus. The slabs of the trabeation are the most important among the fragments: an incomplete block with the broken gable, a capital of an anta, blocks of the steps, and the fragments of semi column and an architrave.[25]

It is very important to point out that the slabs of the trabeation, an incomplete block with the broken gable, as well as blocks of the steps, all have a concave side. Calculations show that they belonged to circles of various diameters. The analysis of the reconstructed plan shows that the geison fragments belong to a structure with a diameter of ~29, 4 m, while the block with the gable belongs to a structure with a diameter of ~37 m. That brings us to the conclusion that this monumental building

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[23] The results of these works have been published only preliminarily: *Obnova povijesne jezgre* 1, 2, and exhibition catalogue *17 u 8, Arheološka istraživanja u jugoistočnom dijelu Dioklecijanove palače 1992. godine* MHAS 2005.

[24] Piplović (1999), 695, considers the possible link between the foundations and the blocks. However, immediately after the discovery of the first blocks, in the early sixties, it was noted that they might have been brought from another place and reused for the filling of the foundations. However, this possibility was never mentioned again at all (Marasović (1961-1962), 24).

[25] *Obnova* 2, 40-42.

had a huge exedra with an inner diameter of ~29, 4 m, which in turn indicates that the inner rooms accessible from the surrounding corridor were covered with a separate roof. Despite the fact that only a few elements have been discovered so far under the walls of the palace, we have attempted, for the first time, a tentative reconstruction of one part of the building, although there is no evidence to indicate the size of the whole building. The surviving elements indicate that the facade of the exedra of the monumental building in Split could be very similar to the second floor façade of the exedra of the Traian's market in Rome.[26] The missing parts needed for the presented reconstruction of the plan were supplied by the comparative analysis of another monumental object's remains whose imposing walls still exist in the bay of Stari Trogir.[27] It is important to point out the striking similarity of the ground plan of the central section of the object in Stari Trogir, which could also date from the 1st century.[28]

It is obvious that the blocks were discovered far from the foundations of the building. The context of the fragments' discovery and the situation on the *Ad basilicas pictas* site, can only be explained with the deliberate destruction of the building for the reuse of its architectural elements during the initial and latter phases of the erection of Diocletian's palace. It is important to note that no spolia

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[26] Mac Donald (1982), pl. 75, 76; Nash (1981), II, 49-58.

[27] Until very recently, except for numerous yacht crews, this object was practically forgotten by archeologists, and so only known from literature. Jelić, who visited the object before 1907, reconstructs the plan of the central section as a courtyard surrounded with lateral wings, partly submerged by the sea. Jelić interpreted the remains that were visible in 1907 as parts of the economy, and identified the site as *Praetorium Caesaris*. However, according to the analysis of the features of the plan and the situation of the terrain in situ, it seems that the object was most probably a monumental villa, which consisted of several tracts disposed along the coast of the bay and connected with a promenade. There are also indications that the complex is probably located over a series of terraces, while the cisterns, thermal complex and possibly the curing facilities are all adjacent to the main wing with the semicircular exedra. According to Jelić's plan, the central section of the villa with exedra is surrounded on three sides with a corridor. There is a striking resemblance with the general conception of maritime villas represented on various frescoes discovered in Pompeii and Herculaneum, as well as with the Esquiline wing of Nero's *Domus Aurea*. This arrangement is analogous to a part of thermal complex of the villa in Baia in Flegrean fields as well. This is the analogy used in the reconstruction of the plan of the object on the Ad basilicas pictas site. The general conception of the plan of the villa in Stari Trogir might be very similar with the conception of the plan of the villa in Val Catena on Brijuni islands, where various segments of the complex were located along the coast of the bay and connected with a promenade. Today, parts of the cistern and thermal complex feature the best-preserved walls. Unfortunately, the object has not yet been excavated, nor published. According to Jelić, one of the halls of the baths was later reused as an early Christian church. For earlier surveys see in Jelić (1907), Marin & Kirigin (1987), Migotti (1991), Begović & Schrunk (2002), Begović & Schrunk (2003).

[28] The most recent research was conducted during the survey of the Roman villas along the Croatian coast and was conducted by Vlasta Dvoržak Begović and Ivančica Dvoržak Schrunk. According to their classification, the villa in Stari Trogir belongs to the group of maritime villas. Cf: Begović & Schrunk (2002), Begović & Schrunk (2003).

were discovered reused or discarded among the foundations of the later buildings on the site. This means that the building most probably remained in use until the beginning of the preparatory works for the building of Diocletian's palace, near the end of the 3rd century AD. It was dismantled during the preparatory works for the erection of Diocletian's palace and its architectural elements were used as a raw material necessary for the infill of the terrace on the site where Diocletian's palace was built. This is confirmed by the presence of a number of various blocks that belonged to this monumental building, which were identified among the foundations of the south wall of the palace. It is obvious that some of them, more or less regular in shape, were incorporated into the palace structure, while those with curves or elaborate profilation, were either adapted for new use or simply dumped into the infill.[29]

There is also evidence for the existence of numerous buildings, most probably villas belonging to nobles, which, judging by sporadic finds of various structures that could date from the Roman period, were built further south to the palace. It is important to notice that the remains of other earlier structures were also discovered on several locations inside Diocletian's palace during various works performed during the 20th century. The most important finds are the remains discovered during reconstruction works conducted in the complex of the City museum in the NE quarter of the palace: parts of the mosaic floors and a basin.[30] Another well was discovered further to the south, in front of the church of St Phillip.[31] It is also known that older walls were discovered in 1924 during the cleanup works in the Bishop's palace, to the north of the Temple of Jovius, but they have never been examined again.[32] A roughly oriented NS wall was discovered under the pavement of the Peristyle.[33] All these finds prove that a series of various structures, possibly spread over the terraces, existed throughout the area where the palace was built. A section of such a supporting wall was discovered during excavations of the NE open court of the triclinium.[34]

However, recent re-excavations, conducted during the nineties, in the NW open court of the triclinium of Diocletian's palace (this area was for the first time excavated in the early sixties[35]) brought to light the most important find and the definitive proof that at least one religious building existed on the site of Diocletian's palace much before its construction. Near the ancient shoreline, a sanctuary consisting of courtyard paved with a white mosaic surrounded by a low wall was

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[29] Marasović et alli (2000). This artificial platform was also discovered under the SE angle tower of the palace, but the complete plan has never been published so far.

[30] Unpublished. Presented on the conference by K. Marasović.

[31] Belamarić (2005).

[32] Bulić – Karaman (1925), 17.

[33] Unpublished. Presented on the conference by K. Marasović.

[34] *Obnova* 2, 40.

[35] Marasović (1961-1962), 26, 28-29, *Obnova* 2, 40-42.

hewn in the surface of the marl, and its remains were discovered surrounded by the later walls of the triclinium of Diocletian's palace. The sanctuary has different orientation than the palace, the one that will be repeated in the deviation of the eastern wall and in other places of the palace.[36] It is very important to note that this sanctuary was deliberately left visible in the NW courtyard of the triclinium complex, and its presence was even noted with the abbreviated inscriptions *HVS* [hunc votum solverunt] engraved on the three walls of the courtyard.[37] Special care was taken during the positioning and founding of the surrounding walls of the palace. Because of that, the later walls of the surrounding corridor are partly resting directly on the marl, on a higher level than the floor of the corridor, while the mosaic floor was still preserved in the courtyard together with the surrounding marl masses. The wall was built on the same level as on other places in the same area. A libation basin was discovered immediately to the south, under the adjoining hall of the ground floor of triclinium, an extension of this structure. It should also be noted that the opening of the drainage canal of Diocletian's palace was positioned directly on the surface of the marl, thus proving that the marl and the sanctuary were visible in the NW courtyard of the palace, while the floor of the south areas must have had a gradual slope.[38]

Another important, earlier structure was also left visible during the building of the palace. Lower parts of the two Hellenic burials were discovered under the cryptoporticus of Diocletian's palace. Although the architecture of these structures obviously indicated that they belong to the *epytombia* type, they were wrongly interpreted as »wells«,[39] despite the fact that fragments of Hellenic pottery were discovered in their interior.[40] However, the recent research of the Archaeological museum archives, brought to light the discovery of old photographs showing similar structures discovered during the excavations conducted in the thirties in Budva (Buthua), where a huge necropolis was devastated during a hotel construction.[41] The only reasonable explanation for the presence of these epytombias in the ground floor of the cryptoporticus is that they had to be respected as the former

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[36] About the deviations from the orthogonal planning see footnote 2.

[37] Although an article about the finds of the mason's marks on the walls of Diocletian's palace was published in *Salona Christiana*, AMS, Split, 1994, these inscriptions have not yet been published scientifically.

[38] It also shows that the reconstructed floor in the greater part of the triclinium complex and the NW open court was restored on the wrong level. Actually, the lowest course of the opus quadratum structures is now almost completely buried in concrete, and the openings of the sewage canals in the south part of the triclinium are now almost completely filled in.

[39] It is highly improbable that anybody would dig a well on the very shore of a beach. The chief indication for the use of the structures as epytombias is the fact that the bottom of the well in the time of building would be higher than the sea level. These epytombias are ~ 1, m deep, while the sea level of the 1st century was ~ 2 m lower.

[40] Marasović (1961-1962), 24.

[41] Marin (1995), 75.

memorial site, and therefore left visible in the ground floor as the earlier religious monument.[42]

The remains of several big walls were discovered under the walls of the easternmost halls of the palace ground floor (21c, d; 22 c, d). It is obvious that these preserved remains are only a part of a bigger structure, because the eastern wall of the palace cuts through the older walls, whose extension should be found outside the palace, further to the east, under the present market place. There is absolutely no evidence for the connection between these walls and the architectural fragments discovered under the south wall of the palace and cryptoporticus. Thus, the recently published idea that the architectural fragments, discovered in the infill of the terrace or in the walls of Diocletian's palace, belong to this building, should be dismissed in its entirety simply because it is practically impossible to have a rectangular ground plan with the circular trabeation and gable.[43]

It is obvious that the builder of the palace could have chosen several building sites, all in the immediate vicinity of the present day palace. That raises the question of how extensive preparatory works would be necessary. All the earlier structures, as well as filling the terrain could be avoided during the building process and no deviations from an ideal plan should be necessary. The necessary infrastructure for the beginning of the building process of the palace would also already be at hand: the aqueduct only had to be partially reconstructed and expanded.

However, the chosen site obviously required many preparatory works. Filling parts of the cove at SW area was necessary, as well as constructing a platform on the SE part for the walls. On the other hand, partial trimming of the rock on several parts of the building site was also required. Anyway, the source of the building material, required for the expanded part of the terrace for the foundations, was also nearby – the buildings of Aspalathos, which were dismantled and used as a quarry. It is even possible that some of the architectural elements, such as monolith columns, were reused during the building of the palace. Thus, it is obvious that the site for the building of the Diocletian's palace was deliberately chosen for more than one reason.

It is perfectly clear that Diocletian's palace was a completely new building, built after a carefully prepared plan, and there is no evidence for any hastily made adaptations of half-finished or completed gynaceum or some other kind of adaptation.[44] The proposed transformation would surely result with visible traces of

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[42] No traces of any elements of the superstructure of these epytombias were discovered; even the highest wall course of one of them is missing. There remains a faint hope that some of the Hellenic stellae in the collections of Split museums that originally stood there would be recognized.

[43] The theory of a »huge temple under Diocletian's palace, one of whose walls was discovered together with three blocks of its richly decorated trabeation«, was published in an interview with the excavator T. Rismondo in the daily newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija*.

[44] The idea, which leads to this conclusion, is the capacity of the aqueduct to Split, which is obviously much bigger than the needs of the palace.

adaptation on practically every structure in the complex. Furthermore, the finds that can be attributed to the function of the gynaceum, the presence of red mud in the sewage and few millstones discovered in the ground floor of the SE part of the palace, are obviously from a later date. It is highly improbable that all the necessary equipment for the manufacture, together with the storerooms, would be arranged in a place where the earlier sanctuary was left visible during the building of the palace and practically just under the core of the emperor's residence.

Recently, there have been many attempts to prove that there were drastic changes during the building process of the palace, mostly related to the origin of the imported architectural elements and their new use in the palace.[45] Considering

[45] The idea about the possible transformation of a half-finished gynaceum is a separate question, which deserves special attention. Comments to only some of the problems of this theory are given in this presentation. For example, it was recently pointed out that two building phases could be identified in the Peristyle, which allegedly, was extended towards the north by two columns that differ in the kind of stone. However, the architect's idea is plain to see: the main entrance to the Vestibule is framed with two pairs of imported red granite columns, and the lateral entrances to the both temenos are, like an echo, framed with two pairs of imported red granite columns that mark the importance of the entrances into the temenos. The northern sections of the colonnades, with the columns of cippolino, are actually a visual counterpoint to the whiteness of plain walls that connect the Protirone and the colonnades. The recent cleaning and restoration of the west wing colonnade, now clearly display the architects idea. The proposed dating for the beginning of the building process is 298, and the proposed connections with the military campaign in Egypt should be dismissed, because, the positioning of the Peristyle colonnades was only possible after the scaffoldings were removed from the southern apartment blocks, semi-ground floor complexes and both temenos. It is highly improbable that these columns, brought from quarries near Aswan, would be placed almost at the beginning of the works and left exposed for various possible accidents and damages during the building process, when all material for the building process had to be transported between the columns and under the archivolts. The canal system of Diocletian's palace is also a marvel that was projected and executed simultaneously with the remainder of the palace. There are indications that there were, in fact, two independent systems of sewage. While the covered canals were dug, for the elimination of waste from dwellings, along the streets in the northern half of the palace, the canal system of the south half was completely different and chiefly planned for the drainage of the springs and rainwater. Due to the terrain's inclination, a system of free flow from various levels was constructed, and the complete south half of the palace was virtually abundant in water. It is possible to reconstruct the sewage system of this part of the palace. During the excavations of the SW sector of the east temenos, segments of a channel were discovered in the substructure platform of the south wall. Judging by the presence of a single preserved opening of the drainage canal, on the south side of the west end of this wall, the rainwater was collected in this canal and drained from the temenos through the deliberately left openings in the south wall of the temenos, right down into the area on the level of the semi-ground floor. The segments of the sewage system of this level were discovered in the area between the Peristyle courtyard east of the Vestibule and the eastern bathhouse. From this level, vertical shafts drained the water down onto the ground floor, where a series of special openings was left in the northern wall of some of the ground floor halls that enabled the construction of shallow canals with NS orientation in the floor (2d, 5, 7 or 8, 10, possibly 12, 16 … 21d). The presence of a single visible section of the drainage canal in the floor of hall 22c indicates that there were at least some kind of rough canals or grooves in

the size of the palace and the amount of building works that had to be executed simultaneously throughout the building site, the final phase of the building process surely included the positioning of the colonnades along the alleys and streets, as well as the building of the Peristyle colonnades, which had their columns imported from Egypt. The reason for the palace's location was very significant: the selected position required much more preparatory works and expenses. It is obvious that it might have been easier to build the palace almost on the same location, but with a somewhat different orientation. It could have been aligned with the already existing centuriation of ager salonitanus, whose decumanus maximus strikes directly into the northern (main) gate of the palace and continues outside the west wall to the position under the slopes of Marjan hill where the St Francis complex is standing today.[46]

Another important fact is that the Roman centuriation of *ager salonitanus* enables the regular division of the ager both in the Split peninsula as well as in the area of Salona and Epetium providing the proper communication between the coasts and urban agglomerations. Thus, the only conclusion is that there were much more important reasons for abandoning the proper orientation and building the palace with deviations from it. It is obvious that the selected position needed numerous preparatory works for the building. At the very beginning, it was necessary to remove a number of existing buildings, both on the building site together and the wider area of Aspalathos, in order to obtain a quiet area for the retired emperor and his associates. The building of the palace required massive cutting of the bedrock, extensive infill of the expanded terrace to the southwest and southeast, the regulation of water sources on the site, and building of separate systems for drainage of sewage and rainfall. All these efforts were expendable because the palace was meant to have much more important function besides being the residence and tomb of the retired emperor. The precise astro-geographical orientation of the palace was necessary in order to fulfill the needs of this function.

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the pavement of the ground floor, which regulated the flow of the water. As judged by the single visible opening, these canals drained the water directly into the sea through a series of openings in the palace's south wall. The level of the reconstructed floor on the ground floor is obviously wrong. For the possible later date of the beginning of the works, and the connection with the military campaign in Egypt, see in Belamarić (2003).

[46] Another question that has to be answered is what ancient structure preceded the chapel of St Felix on the location at the end of Cardo Maximus, in the area where the Franciscan Monastery stands today. Today we only know that there was an octagonal early Christian structure dedicated to St Felix, which later served as the church chapel of St Francis. It was destroyed in the 20th century and its plan was presented in the street pavement. However, nobody knows what preceded this chapel.

Although it was usually assumed that the palace was built primarily as the residence and mausoleum of the retired emperor, another task was fulfilled as well, because the long religious continuity of the site was preserved with the erection of the palace complex, which included four temples. Thus, the palace had another level of symbolism, which was much more important, because the palace was deliberately built as a monument to the ruling system of the tetrarchs. The *Decenallia* group of five statues (four tetrarchs with Jupiter in the center), as seen in Rome on the Forum Romanum,[47] certainly stood over the main, northern gate and possibly over the western[48] and eastern gates, while four separate temples, dedicated to several deities, were built in the two sanctuaries (temenos) inside the palace complex. Only a single, octagonal temple was built in the eastern temenos, while the group of three temples, a rectangular and two rotundas, were built in the larger, western temenos.[49]

For a very long time, it was supposed that the rectangular temple in the western temenos was dedicated to Jupiter, while the octagonal temple in the eastern temenos was interpreted as the emperor's mausoleum. Although many scientists have tried to establish to whom this temple was dedicated, and many theories were put forward, several things are now certain: the octagonal temple is definitely a mausoleum and a temple to Jovius, and this fact eliminates the possible dedication of the western temple to Jupiter.[50] The key that confirms the funerary character of the eastern temple is the frieze, situated at the same level with the capitals of the upper colonnade. This frieze is divided in eight sections each containing three slabs. The pilaster capitals separate the sections. The focal points of the frieze are the medallions on the central slabs in the eastern section of the frieze. While the

[47] The appearance of the group is known from the relief representing *Oratio Constantini*, on the Arch of Constantine in Rome. Today, only one column base is preserved on the Forum Romanum, while the two other were discovered during the Renaissance and since lost. More in Strong, Nash (1981), I, 199-201.

[48] The main indication for the presence of these sculptural groups is the presence of two marble heads, built into the wall made much later, in the immediate vicinity of the western gate. Although no statue bases were discovered on any of the lateral entrances to the palace, it can be assumed that these groups also existed over the gates, as the repetition of the composition of the northern gate. Until very recently, the presence of big stone blocks over the geison of the western gate remained unnoticed. These blocks were still there at the time of Adam and Cassas. About these facts, and more about the possible accreditation of the sculptures, see: Cambi (2005) with the survey of older literature.

[49] The difference in sizes of both temenos is significant. In the situation when only one temple has to be positioned in temenos, the bigger, octagonal temple would fit perfectly into the western temenos, while the rectangular temple, if alone, would be better situated in the eastern temenos.

[50] Cambi (1999) discusses the problem of the dedication of the western temple and gives the survey of the earlier opinions.

busts of Diocletian and his empress Prisca are enclosed in the medallions in the NE and SE fields of the frieze, the central slab on the east side is now missing. The third medallion, with the representation of Hermes Psychopompos solves the riddle of the lost frieze slab, because it is known that Psychopompos lead the deceased towards immortality. Thus, it is possible that the representation of Sol Invictus, probably surrounded by the laurel wreath, was carved on the lost block of the frieze. These four segments of the frieze actually represented the apotheosis of Diocletian and Prisca. Only the emperor had the privilege of apotheosis, the transformation of a man into a god after death. The apotheosis is obvious, because, we see the emperor and his consort carried to the Elysian Fields with the help of a psychopomp figure, in this case Hermes, who guides the souls of the deceased emperor and his wife to their destination, to immortality, while the supreme god Sol Invictus is watching.[51] The symbolic apotheosis of the deified emperor, with its culmination in the central slab of the eastern segment of the frieze, indicates that the eastern rectangular recess of the mausoleum actually was the resting place of the Diocletian's porphyry sarcophagus that is known to have existed.[52] The lost mosaics in the interior of the mausoleum's dome surely completed the decorative and symbolic program of Diocletian's monumental burial place.

[51] More about the possible representation on the lost block of the frieze, in Rendić – Miočević (1992).

[52] Numerous fragments of a porphyry sarcophagus were discovered in 1924, during the cleanup after the fire in the old Bishop's palace, north-by-north-east of the mausoleum. All the fragments display traces of violent destruction. Many of them are more or less amorphous while some of them still give an indication for their possible position. These fragments unfortunately have never been the subject of a scientific study and remained unpublished.

Although old written sources mention the existence of four temples in the palace,[53] the remains of the two rotundas were discovered in the sixties.[54] According to the description given by Proculiano, these temples were dedicated to Cybil and Venus. However, there are some important discoveries that have to be taken into consideration: in the crypt of the northern rotunda, a spring of the fresh water, as well as the fragment of a full plastic sculpture — a paw of a lion or a panther[55] were discovered during the excavations. This indicates that this rotunda was indeed dedicated to Cybele and Magna Mater, because it is well known that Magna Mater was often represented as a sitting figure between a pair of lions or panthers. It is important to know that Cybele was the Phrygian goddess, known to her followers as »the mother of God«. The cult of Cybil has been closely related to the worship of Mithra, whose cult, in turn, was closely associated with the cult of Sol Invictus. In light of the discovery of the sculpture fragment and the presence of a spring of fresh water in the crypt, it seems that the north rotunda actually was dedicated to Cybil, and that Proculiano has made a mistake in interpreting the long-standing tradition and the remains of the temples visible at that time.

The question of the patron deity of the western temple puzzled scientists for a long time, but very early, Thomas Archdeacon supposed that the temple was

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[53] Proculian's speech brings the following description of the temples in a loose translation from Croatian: »*Inside the palace, once there were four beautiful temples: on the south side a temple of the goddess Cybele, who was called the mother of the gods; a second dedicated to Venus on the north, a third to the east dedicated to Jupiter which later was dedicated to the immortal and famous Virgin, the mother of the real and only god, as well as St Doimo your patron; and the fourth dedicated to Janus on the west, later adapted and called St John's chapel. The first stands across the second, and third across the fourth. All are similar with the execution of their stone, door and geison, although they were built different in shape and size: the first is spherical or round, the second angular and hexagonal, the third octagonal and the fourth rectangular.*« It is obvious that Proculian knew about the existence of four temples, but there is no evidence for the state of preservation of the two rotundas in the eastern temple. Although Robert Adam later mentioned, »*the remains of another very small temple, now almost completely destroyed*«, this description does not give any evidence whether Adam's description related to the northern or the southern rotunda. If the data presented in the speech is correct, the description of the shapes of the temples' cellae, indicates that the temples must have been preserved at least with parts of the walls of the cellae in that time. About Proculiano's speech, see Marasović – Alujević (1984). The quoted sections of the speech are this author's translations from the Croatian version translated and published in the cited work.

[54] During the urban reconstruction of the two blocks to the west of the Peristyle, the remains of these temples were discovered. The remains of the podium, stylobate and crypt, as well as column fragments and capitals (all unpublished), together with the blocks of sculpted geison and casseted ceiling, were discovered on the south. However, only the crypt with the spring of fresh water, unpublished fragment of a statue (paw of a lion or leopard) and a single block of the stylobate were discovered in the north. During the digging of sewage canal, Vicko Andrić was the first one who came across the remains of the northern temple in the 19th century. The discovery of the temple remains was preliminary published in Marasović (1961-1962).

[55] Unpublished. Photograph courtesy of Franko Oreb, PhD.

dedicated to Aesculapus.[56] If we consider the religious continuity of the area, back from Illyrian time until the time of Diocletian, as well as the constant worship of the cult of Asclepius / Aesculapus, which is obvious, we can now say with great certainty, that the western temple was indeed dedicated to Aesculapus. Furthermore, it is known that the cult of Asclepius /Aesculapus was often related with the cult of Demeter and Magna Mater, mainly because he was respected as the guardian of divinization and the guarantor of immortality. There is also an important religious association of the cult of Aesculapus and Sol Invictus. Namely, it is well known that Asclepius was born as the son of Apollo. Somewhat later, he became associated with the cult of Helios and Mithra as well, and was considered the Sun released and closely associated with the cult of Sol Invictus. In addition, Sol Invictus is present among the important figures from the Roman Pantheon on the consoles of lintel of the temple and on the geison block on the NW corner.[57] Finally, there is also another obvious reason why this temple could be dedicated to Aesculap: the failing health of the retired emperor, who barely survived a heavy illness shortly before his abdication. The dedication to Aesculap would mean that the religious continuity of the site, from prehistory to Roman rule, was preserved along with the earlier cult objects: the shrine in the NW courtyard of the triclinium and epytombias in cryptoporticus.

V CREDO IN UNUM DEUM

The true meaning of the palace and its great symbolism has finally been (very recently) explained by the research of the late professor Mladen Pejaković, to whose memory this text is dedicated. Although on several occasions it was put forward that the cult of Sol Invictus might be present in Diocletian's palace, and even though the possibility of Sol Invictus being the patron deity of the western temple was indicated, we can now say that the dedication to Sol Invictus does not relate only to the western temple, but to the whole palace. This explains the complete symbolism of the palace, as well as the significance and meaning of the special position for its construction.

It is important to say that the quintessence of the cult of Sol Invictus was the annual festival of the birth of the Unconquered Sun (or *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti*) celebrated in the Roman Empire around the time of the winter solstice. The longer duration of daylight that follows the winter solstice was interpreted as a symbolic »rebirth« of the sun. This festivity originated earlier with the appearance of the cult

[56] Toma Arhiđakon: *Kronika*, Split 1977, 26.
[57] Today visible in the interior of the adjacent house.

of Sol Invictus, the cult of »the unconquered sun«. During the reign of Emperor Aurelian (270-275 AD), this cult became the most important cult that even surpassed the official cult of Jupiter. The main novelty and the spirit of this cult was the association of the Sun's rebirth with the everlasting rejuvenation of the Roman Empire, albeit that adoration of the sun was not Rome's official religion.

In the Roman calendar, December 25 was the date of the winter solstice.[58] Sunday (Deis Solis), was, by Mithraism, considered as the day of the Sun, the sacred day for rest. The birthday of Mithra, (December 25) was celebrated as the birth of the Sun, who was born by the »Queen of Heaven« – »Mother of God«.[59] On that day, the sun reaches the point of its southernmost position below the equator, where it appears to stand still for three days. After that, the sun slowly begins its return towards the northern hemisphere, gaining strength with each passing day. This meant that the sun »was reborn«, or the »light came back into the world«, or »the light of the world had returned«. It is known that Diocletian, just like Aurelian before him, and Julian the Apostate, much later after him, wore the Mithraic titles of »Pius«, »Felix«, and »Invictus« (devout, blessed, and invincible). The Mithraism originates from the eastern part of the empire and later, in the 3rd century, it was associated with the cult of Sol Invictus. Thus, this resulted in the promotion of Sol Invictus to the highest rank deity in the hierarchy of the Roman Pantheon. Sol invictus became the special protector of the emperors and the empire. Finally, during Diocletian's reign, Mithra and Sol Invictus were unified as one god, des-

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[58] The Roman »Julian Calendar« was adopted in 46 BC. In that time, December 24th was the shortest day of the year. Thus, December 25th was the first day of the year when daylight began to increase. It was considered as the rebirth, or annual birthday of the Invincible Sun. Due to several redactions and changes of the calendar which were happening since the beggining of the 4th century, and were imposed by the problems of the odd lenght of the year (~365 ¼ days), the winter solstice today comes on December 21st. The main fundamental work related, among other geoastronomical problems, to the problems of the calendar is M. Milanković's: *Kanon der Erdbestrahlungen und seine Anwendung auf das Eiszeitenproblem*, SKA, Beograd, 1941. Milanković actually solved the problem of the calendar in 1923 by the direct order of all-orthodox patriarch. Unfortunately, his reform of the calendar was never applied. For more about Milanković see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milutin_Milankovic.

[59] As explained in the Old Persian traditional tales, Mithras was actually incarnated into the human form of the Savior expected by Zarathustra. Mithras was born of Anahita, the immaculate virgin mother once worshipped as a fertility goddess before the hierarchical reformation. According to Persian traditions, Anahita conceived the Savior from the seed of Zarathustra that was preserved in the waters of Lake Hamun in the Persian province of Sistan. Mithra ascended to heaven in 208 B.C., 64 years after his birth. This birth took place in a grotto, at the winter solstice. Shepherds attended the birth and regaled Mithra with gifts. There is also an older myth about the birth of Mithra that he was magically born from a rock from which he formed himself using his Will at the dawn of time. Mithra holds in his hand a stiletto and torch. There is a statue from Housesteads, which shows Mithra's birth from the rock. It actually represents Mithra as a stellar god who rules the cosmos even at the time of his birth, while the twelve signs of the zodiac surround him. There are also known representations of Mithra with the serpent twisted around his birthstone / egg.

cribed with a crown of sunrays over his head. Furthermore, eastern tradition and ceremonies were implied on Diocletian's court, and the influences of Syrian and Egyptian art were deliberately used in the palace itself. Nevertheless, Diocletian was not the first emperor who claimed the association of the emperor with the Sun god. Even from the time of Nero, Roman emperors proclaimed themselves destined to the throne by virtue of having been born with the divine ruling power of the sun. Many Mithraic reliefs with the representation of Mithras and Sol sharing a banquet over a table draped with the skin of the bull were discovered throughout the Roman Empire. It is known that the Mithraic cult was present in Dalmatia from the beginning of the 2nd century, but it reached its culmination somewhat later if compared with other provinces.[60]

Regarding Diocletian's palace, the collection of data that helped in resolving the monument's meaning, was a very difficult and lengthy process. It is well known that during the excavations of the crossing of the Cardo and Decumanus, back in 1960, an interesting, previously unknown structure was partly investigated; the accessible parts of preserved roman *decussis*, a platform that was leveled when the process of marking of the building site of the palace began.[61] The obvious deviations from the ideal ground plan and their parallels with the deviations executed on the palace, gave evidence to the fact that this carefully prepared platform under the crossing of streets, was indeed a starting point from which the Architect's[62] plan was projected on the selected terrain. With the completion of the terrain measurements, the building of the palace could start. Up until recently, the deviations in the orientation of various walls and deviations from the orthogonal planning in the various parts of the palace, were attributed to the problems encountered on the building site. Thus, all the necessary adaptations of the original plans, during the process of the erection of Diocletian's palace, were explained as last minute changes.[63] These deviations, described as »architect's knowledge of the valorization of the visures and the knowledge of the use of axial planning«, are usually present in the situation when alternations are necessary during the construction of a building when the needs for the visual neutralization of the irregularities of the plan are necessary. In the case of Diocletian's palace, they have completely different meaning.

The recent research has finally shown that all these deviations were deliberate and pre-planned because there were specific needs, required from the Architect, which had to be fulfilled in order to reach the true symbolism of the palace. The palace had a third and highest level of symbolism, because it was planned as a

[60] Domić Kunić A. (2001) 52 passim.

[61] Very recently, a small section of NW part of decussis was excavated for the first time. K. Marasović PhD presented these finds on the conference in Split.

[62] In this case, we use the name Architect to honor the author of the architectural project of the palace because we do not know the name of the builder.

[63] J. Marasović (1977) 87.

monument for the Invisible Sun. There are several indications for that, because the deviations were determined by various aspects of the sun's appearance: its daily and annual cycluses, the length of a day, spring and autumn equinoxes, winter and summer solstices; they were all related to special features deliberately done on the palace. All these necessities were executed in order to display the particular elements of the solar cycle.[64]

It is obvious that all this required good knowledge of the specific geometry required during the planning, geometry based on the sun's positions. It is known that every building process starts with the definition of the first stable point as the center for the orientation. In Roman times, this point was defined with the use of a groma.[65] The groma was a specific device, used by agrimensors; Roman geometers also used it during the measuring and partition of the ager and city area. On the selected point in the center of the future building site, a flattened stone plate was fixed with a central hole for the position of the groma. This hole was known as *umbilicus soli* or the navel of the sun. In the case of Diocletian's palace, this position was discovered at the axes crossing of the Peristyle and the EW street.[66] Thus, from the measurement of selected distances from the *umbilicus soli*, the first eight orientation points were defined as the chief proportions of the palace[67] as well. The analysis had shown that the angles of the mausoleum's octagon are aligned with geoastronomic directions. Orientation obtained with this octagon was used during the definition of the perimeter of the palace, and the position of the Peristyle in the palace. All this is definitive proof that the importance of the precise location of the palatial complex was a necessity, which had to be fulfilled before the beginning of the building process. It is obvious that the palace was planned very carefully and that the building process lasted much longer than usual, in order to obtain all the necessary material and architectural perfection. The idea of the palace, together with the idea for the ruling system of the tetrarchy, had a very prominent place in

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[64] The best illustration of the problem is the following part of the interview with Mladen Pejaković, published in *Slobodna Dalmacija*: »The position of the geographical parameters, inclinations of the Sun on the horizon, angles of the sunrays in various periods of the year; all that had to be taken into consideration, and all of it was reflected in relation to the various segments of the building and their deliberate deviations from a standard plan. The deviation of the eastern wall of the palace was needed because the positions of the sun on the day of the winter solstice and both spring and autumn equinoxes are marked on this wall. However, the position of the summer solstice is placed on the direction of true north. The deviation of the NE corner of the palace complex, which was interpreted as the building necessity was deliberately done for the sole purpose of catching the first sunray from the mountain of Mosor / the orientation of the local east /« (Pejaković …).

[65] For the graphic reconstruction of Groma see: Gabričević (1962).

[66] Gabričević (1962).

[67] Just one example is the length of the southern façade of one Roman stadium (177 m). »Another important feature is the fact that the sun rises precisely on the true east and west only twice during the year: on the spring and autumn equinox. Beside these points, it was necessary to establish local points of east and west on the summer solstice-so called »summer east and west«; and on the winter solstice the »winter east and west« (Pejaković).

Diocletian's life. It is possible that the Emperor's building program was conceived very early during the reign of Diocletian, possibly immediately after his ascension to the throne, and its realization was continued during his reign. However, the completion of the palace was done with great haste, and many details, mainly those that had to be finished after the building process was completed, actually remained unfinished.

It is certain that Diocletian was well aware of the religious situation at the end of his rule. He was aware of the imminent, great religious change, despite the persecution of the Christians. He even possibly predicted that the Christianity might become a predominant religion. Diocletian was aware that he has to build a monument, but not a monument only for himself and for the system of the tetrarchy that he had founded, but a monument for his belief, a monument to Sol Invictus, a monument to the Invincible Sun.

The strength of an empire was Diocletian's credo. It was credo in un dio, the credo of a living god whose belief was in the Invincible Sun. Diocletian was Jovius, son of Jupiter. Zeus, Aton, Oziris, Shamash[68] and Brahma preceded Jupiter as personifications of the Sun god. Jupiter was a protector of the Roman Empire, and all these gods, as personifications of the Sun God, were rulers of the earlier pantheons. Not coincidentally, the winter solstice was the day when the believers of the pagan world celebrated the birth of their Sun Gods. We must remind you that the solar cult was very important for ancient Egyptian rulers. The winter solstice had a special place in their mythology. For example, the sun illuminates the cult statue of Osiris at the end of hypostyle hall in the great cave temple in Abu Simbel twice a year, only on the winter and summer solstices.[69] Thus, while the Egyptians celebrated Osiris, Greeks celebrated Apollo and Bacchus, and Chaldean celebrated Adonis, Persians celebrated Mithra in a time of year when the Zodiac

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[68] Shamash was the common name of the sun god in Babylonia and Assyria. It was believed that Shamash was the dispenser of justice because wrong was sent to darkness and injustice was brought to light. The stage was set for the earliest recorded concept of a solar object as a being identified with the heavens, and as an archetypal god who brings laws to an individual. In this ancient cosmogony, Shamash also did daily battles with the forces of darkness, until reemerging »reborn« at dawn in the east as a symbol of the powers of light over the enveloping darkness. An archetypal cosmological view that the Judeo-Christian tradition inherited is readily apparent by examining the sacred works of these three great branches of religion.

[69] Among the earliest recorded cultures, Egyptians are among those that fully embraced the sun as a deity. Ra was their main cosmic deity. Early Egyptian kings claimed descent from his lineage. At the beginning of the Middle Kingdom (2134-1668 B.C.E.), the worship of Ra, became a state religion. During the Theban dynasties, the cult of Ra was associated with Amon and was transformed into the supreme god Amon-Ra. During the reign of Amenhotep II (18th Dynasty) Amon-Ra was renamed to Aton, an ancient term denoting physical solar force. Amenhotep's son, when he became the king Amenhotep IV, revolutionized Egyptian religion by issuing a proclamation that Aton was the only one and true god, creating the first monotheistic religion. Thus, the progression of the sun through the heavens became an eventual and present deity for millions of believers.

sign of Virgo (it is known that the sun is born of a virgin) rose on the horizon.[70] Thus, the ancient festival of the Winter Solstice, later united with the festival of the birth of the Sun, the Christian Church eventually adopted as the celebration of the nativity of Jesus, and was called Christmas. Constantine the Great was the first great emperor of Christianity, who very soon succeeded Diocletian, the last great Roman emperor who worshiped the Roman Pantheon. Constantine, who was an early Christo-pagan (Christian), maintained the title »Pontifex Maximus« the high priest of paganism, and remained a worshipper of Apollo. His coins were inscribed: *SOLI INVICTO COMITI*, what was interpreted as »Committed to the Invincible Sun«. During Constantine's reign, the new religion, officially titled »Christianity«, surfaced as the blend of worship of the pagan Sun with the worship of the True Creator (syncretism). Sol Invictus will proudly shine on the sky only once more, during the reign of Julian the Apostate.[71]

[70] The sign of the cross formed by the elliptic and the celestial equator was one of the signs of Mithra. There are numerous gods and heroes such as Tammuz, Adonis, Balder, Attis, Dionis, Hercules, Perseus, and Theseus, who were born by union of a virgin mother and divine father.

[71] Contrary to the usual opinion about the pacifist nature of Christianity, it must be noted that, after the legalisation of Christianity, especially after the Constantine's prohibition of the celebration of Misteries and sacrifices to idols, Christianity started religious intolerance, which in turn resulted with the systematic harassment of other religious communities and their shrines. Although the pagan religion itself was not forbidden, except for the sacrifices that were included as the part of the religious practise, the road was opened for more and more persecutions and intolerance towards paganism. Mithraism, as an active cult, survived as long as the proclamation of Theodosius' law in 393 which forbade all manifestations of pagan cults throughout the empire. As a result, the deliberate destruction, or abandonement of temples and shrines followed immediately, and the mithraeums were the first targets of christian zeal. The existence of another face of early Christianity, far from placid and peaceful, much darker and more violent, is a fact which has to be examined properly. The complete revision of all aspects of Christianity and the grave consequences of its impact on other religious communites is neccessary.

LITERATURE

Abbreviations

AD = Anali Instituta JAZU Dubrovnik
ARR = Arheološki radovi i rasprave, Zagreb
HAM = Hortus Artium Medievalium, Zagreb – Motovun
HO = Hrvatska obzorja, Split
JA = Jahrbuch fur altertumkunde, Wien
KB = Kulturna Baština, Split
PIA = Prilozi Instituta za arheologiju, Zagreb
PPU = Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji, Split
RFFZd = Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Zadru
VAHD = Vjesnik za arheologiju i historiju dalmatinsku, Split
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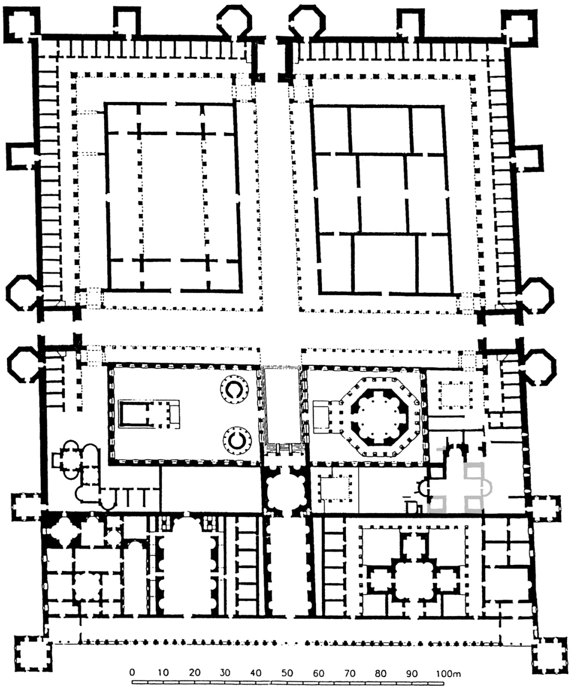
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VARIA DIOCLETIANEA

Sažetak

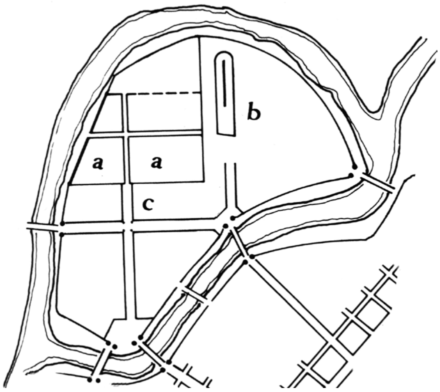
Iz starih povijesnih izvora poznato je da je u dnu splitskog zaljeva prije gradnje Dioklecijanove palače postojalo naselje Aspalathos. Donedavno nije bilo indicija o stvarnoj naravi tog naselja. Na osnovi nekoliko pronađenih helenističkih natpisa smatralo se da su Aspalathos podignuli viški kolonisti. U doba helenističke uprave mogu se datirati i dvije epitombije pronađene ispod Dioklecijanove palače. Postavlja se, međutim, pitanje zašto je Aspalathos sagrađen upravo na tom mjestu, kad su u neposrednoj blizini bila veća naselja, Salonae i Epetion. Odgovor nalazimo u prirodnim svojstvima tog područja, prije svega u prisutnosti izvora sumporne vode koji su još u doba Ilira najvjerovatnije korišteni za liječenje. Vrlo je vjerojatno da je već tada postojalo svetište posvećeno Asklepiju. Stoga je moguće da je u Aspalathosu u helenističko vrijeme sagrađeno novo svetište posvećeno Asklepiju, te je na taj način održan vjerski kontinuitet. Dolaskom rimske uprave Aspalathos postaje sastavni dio šireg toponima *Salonae*, čime se potvrđuje uobičajena praksa da se pokraj sjedišta rimskoga garnizona u blizini gradi i lječilište kad god to prirodni uvjeti dopuštaju. Poznato je da su u prvom stoljeću posl. Kr. sagrađena dva akvedukta: onaj kojim je vodom opskrbljivan današnji Solin i, drugi, koji vodi sve do arheološkog lokaliteta *Ad basilicas pictas*, sjeverno od današnje Dioklecijanove palače. Akvedukt je u trećem stoljeću očito produžen do Dioklecijanove palače. Do danas nije pruženo zadovoljavajuće tumačenje arhitektonskih ostataka pronađenih prigodom posljednjih arheoloških iskapanja na lokalitetu *Ad basilicas pictas*, no uzevši u obzir same nalaze, kvalitetu gradnje kao i niz pronađenih arhitektonskih ulomaka iz prvog stoljeća pronađenih u temeljima Dioklecijanove palače, može se pouzdano reći da ta zgrada sigurno nije mogla biti nikakav odeon, već se najvjerojatnije radilo o monumentalnom objektu u sklopu toplica sagrađenom pokraj akvedukta. Oko tog objekta, koji je ostao u funkciji i za vrijeme rimske vladavine i koji je zasigurno bio višekratno obnavljan i uljepšavan, sagrađen je niz raskošnih vila rimskih uglednika, a na području jugoistočnog sektora Dioklecijanove palače nalazilo se svetište čiji su ostaci pronađeni prigodom arheoloških iskapanja istočnih prizemnih dvorana. Potkraj trećeg stoljeća pristupljeno je gradnji Dioklecijanove palače u dnu zaljeva. S jedne strane, pogodnost je bila postojanje infrastrukture Aspalathosa, dakle akvedukta, dok je, s druge strane, vjerski kontinuitet mjesta nastavljen, jer je sama Dioklecijanova palača, osim sepulkralne funkcije, imala i funkciju svetišta, hrama posvećenog Suncu i spomenika tetrarhije.



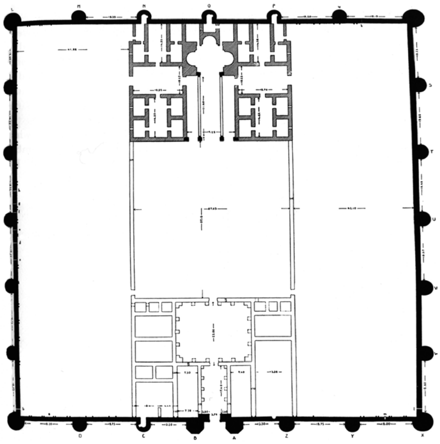
1.1. The plan of Diocletian's palace in Split (J. Marasović with additions by S. Živkov)



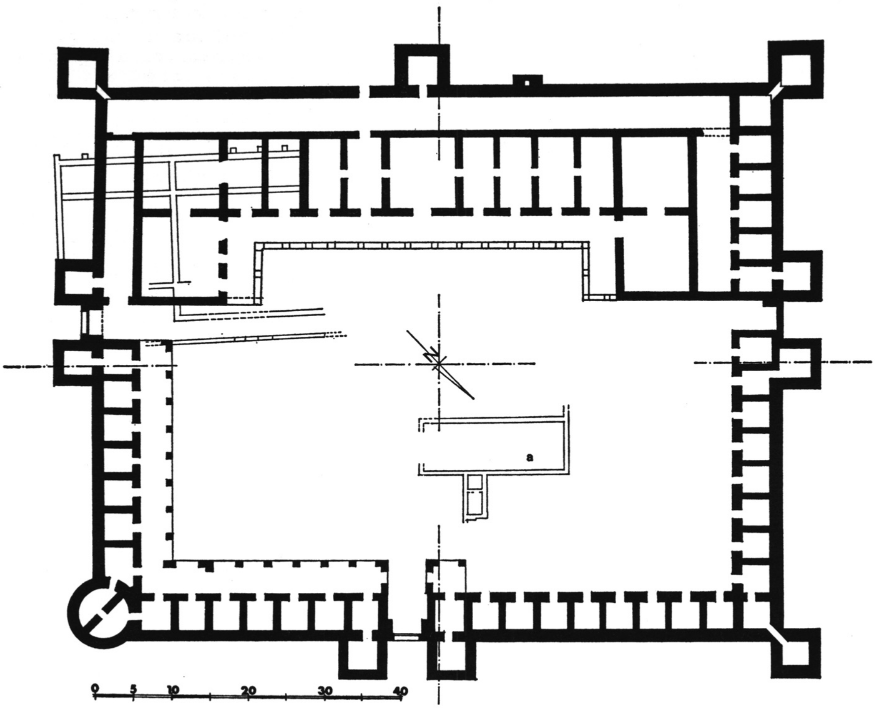
1.2. Reconstruction of Diocletian's palace (Ernest Hebrard and Jacques Zellier)



2.1. *The plan of the palace in Antioch: A = residential wing, C = tetrapylon, B = hippodrome (Mac Donald)*



2.2. *Desert castle in Mshatta (from: The art and architecture of Islam 650-1250)*



2.3. *Fortified villa in Mogorilo (Vetters)*

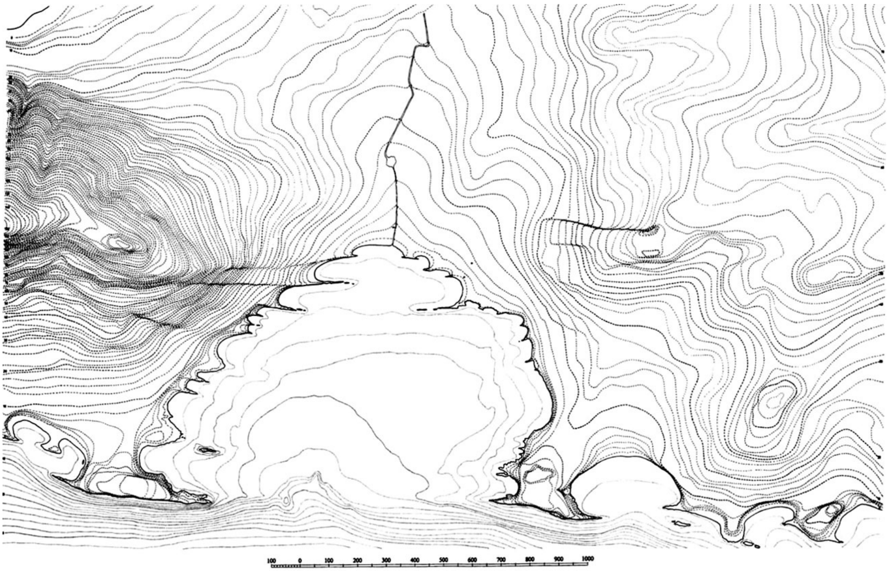


3.1. Tabula Peuntegeriana, detail with the wider area of Split



3.2. The flysch structures on the south slope of Marjan.
Inclined alternate layers of limestone (left) and marl (right). Photo: S. Živkov

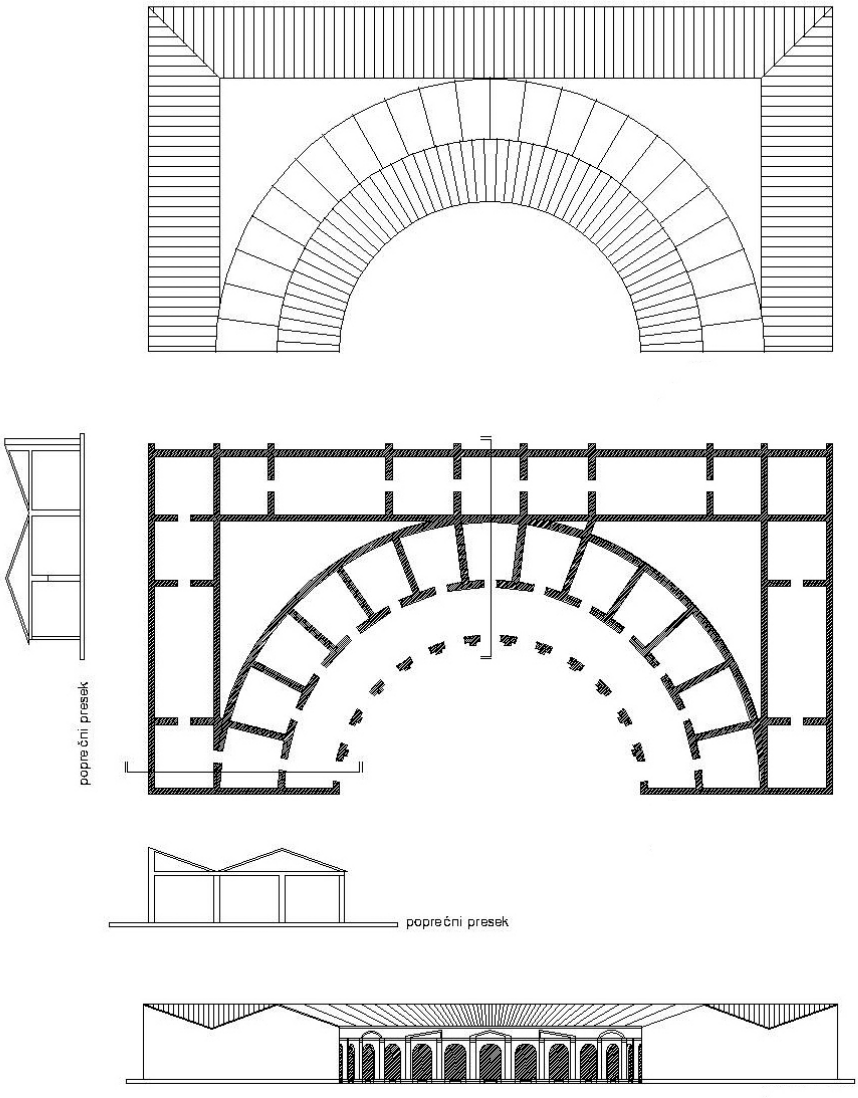




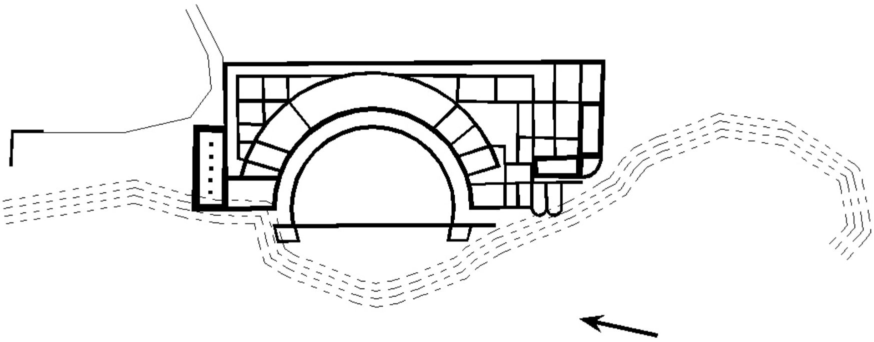
4.1. The situation in Split's bay area before the building of Diocletian's palace (J. Marasović)



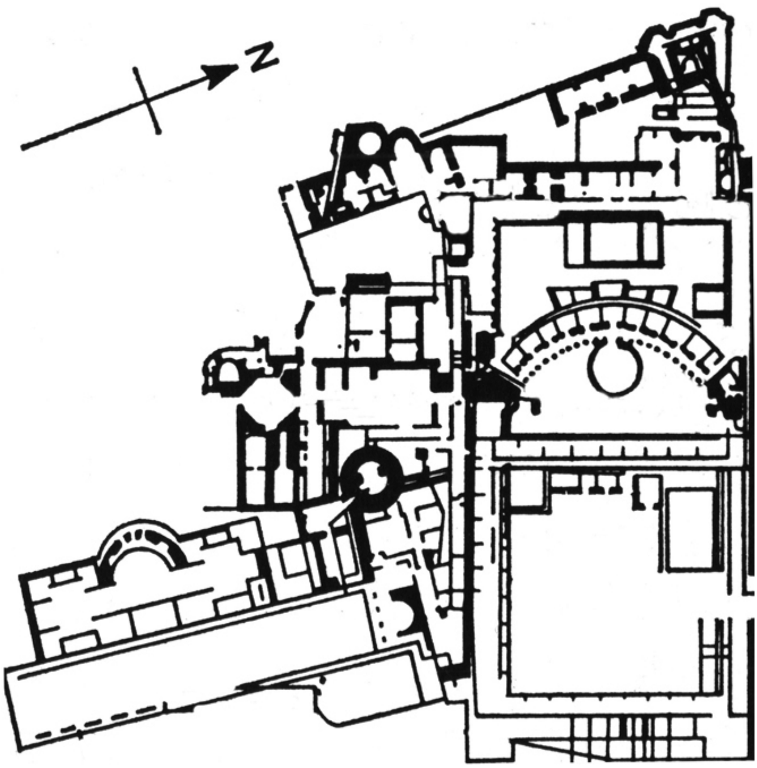
4.2. The situation in Split's bay area with Diocletian's palace (J. Marasović)



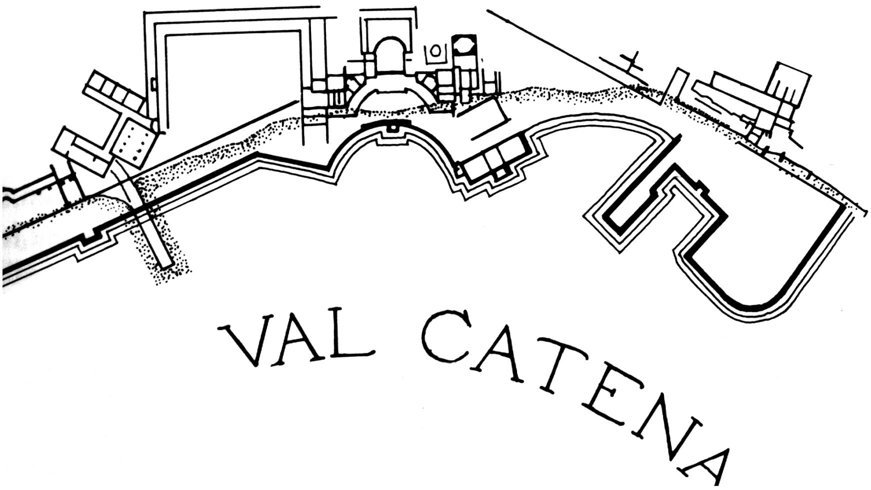
5.1. Reconstructed plan of a monumental object partly excavated on the »Ad basilicas pictas« site (S. Živkov & D. Pupić)



6.1. The plan of the villa in Stari Trogir's bay area (Luka Jelić / S. Živkov)



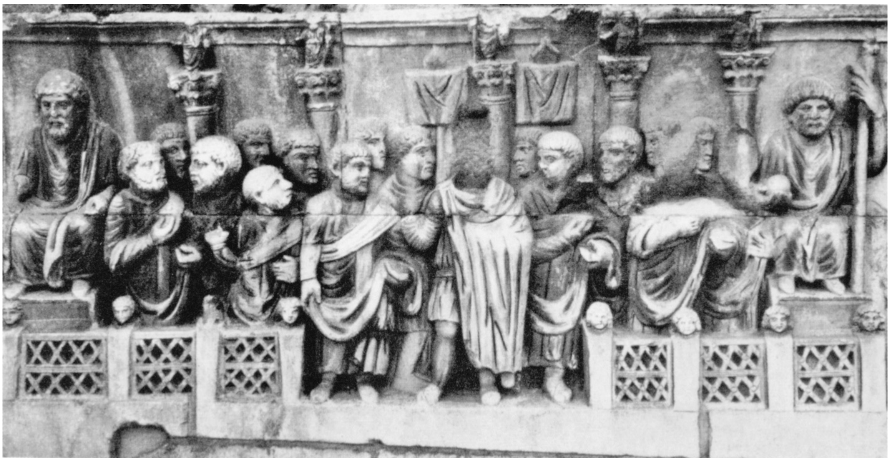
6.2. The plan of the earlier thermal complex in Baia (Mc Kay)



7.1. The plan of the north wing with exedra, the villa in Val Catena – Brijuni (Ward Perkins)



7.2. Maritime villa, fresco from Stabiae



8.1. Oratio Constantini, representation on Constantine's arch, Rome (Nash)



8.2. The upper part of Porta Aurea before the reconstruction. The bases of the statues are clearly visible in the later wall (vintage photograph)



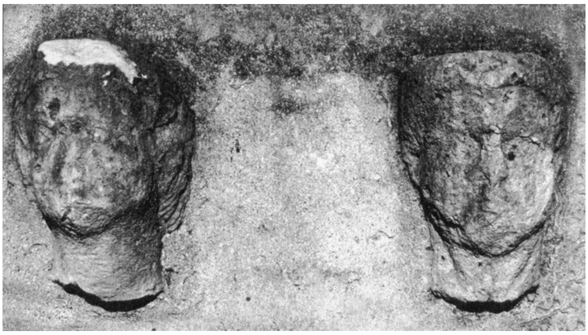
9.1. Cassas: Porta Aurea, bases of the statues are visible, as well as now lost columns and capitals of the first floor



9.2. Deccenalia base in Rome



10.1. Cassas: Porta Ferrea with the now lost big stone blocks over the geison



10.2. Heads built beside Porta Ferrea.
Possible representations of an emperor and one of Dioscuri



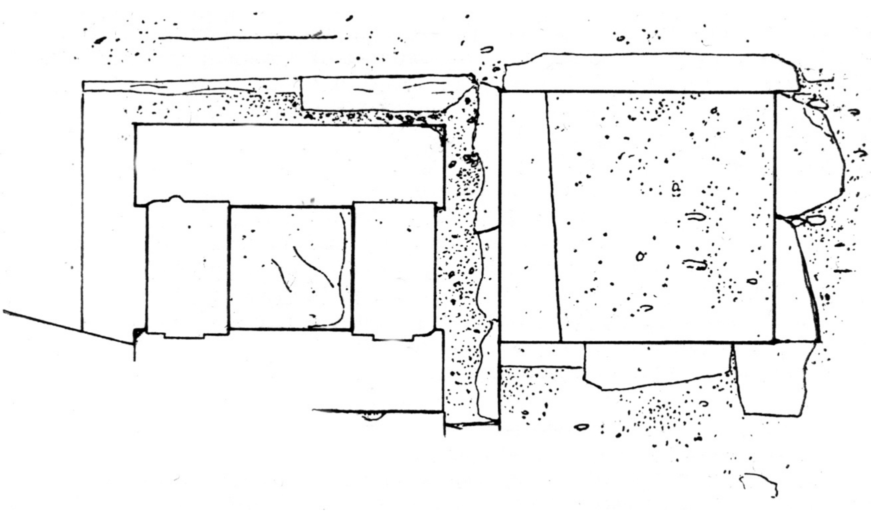
11.1. Find of epytombia during the excavations of necropolis in Budva (Emilio Marin)



11.2. East epytombia in Split (Photo S. Živkov)



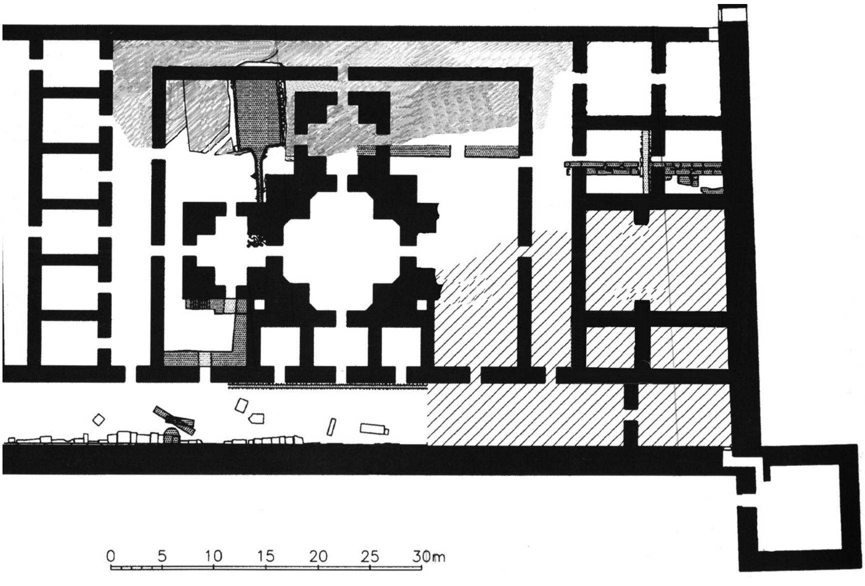
12.1. West epytombia in Split (Photo S. Živkov)



12.2. Epytombias in Split, plan (Ivan Marović)



13.1. Sanctuary hewn in marl, western part, NW open court of Triclinium (Photo S. Živkov)



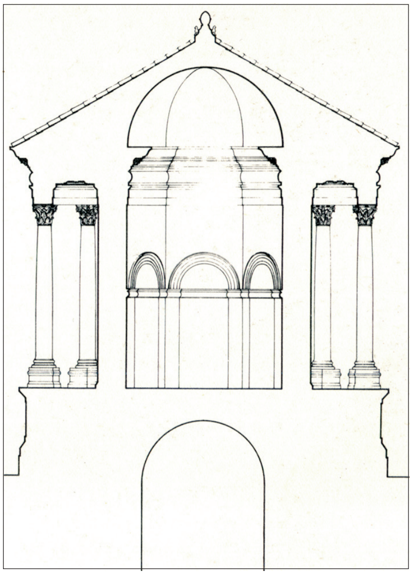
13.2. Plan of the eastern part of the ground floor of Diocletian's apartments with earlier structures. The area marked gray is the marl platform (J. Marasović with additions by S. Živkov)



14.1. Sanctuary hewn in marl, NW open court of Triclinium (Photo S. Živkov)



14.2. Inscription H [unc] V [otum SO[l] VE [runt]. Eastern wall of NW open court of triclinium (Photo S. Živkov)



15.1. Northern temple, cross-section
(D. Radovniković)



15.2. Southern temple, capital
(Photo S. Živkov)



15.3. Northern temple: Paw of a lion, discovered in the crypt
(Franko Oreb)



16.1. Southern temple: fragment of the coffered ceiling (Photo S. Živkov)



16.2. Southern temple: fragment of sculpted geison (Nenad Cambj)



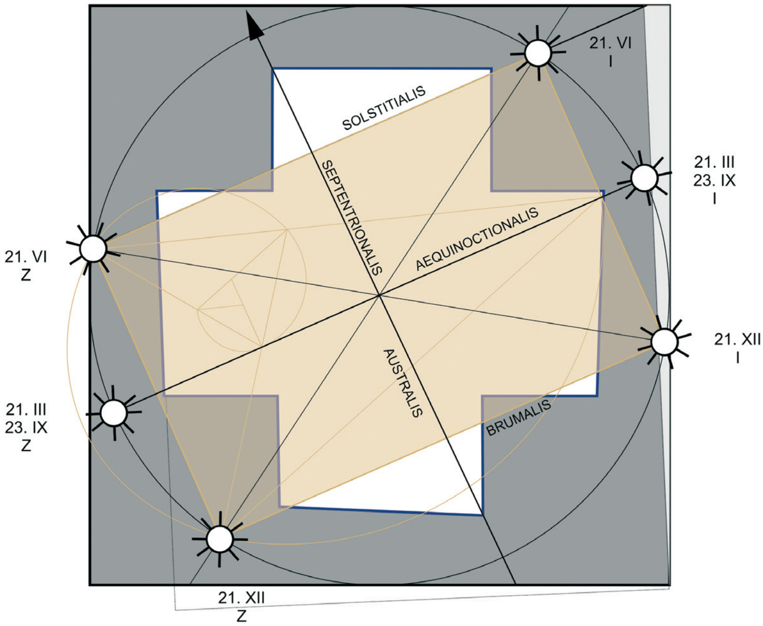
17.1. The temple of Asclepius: lintel of the portal (Photo S. Živkov)



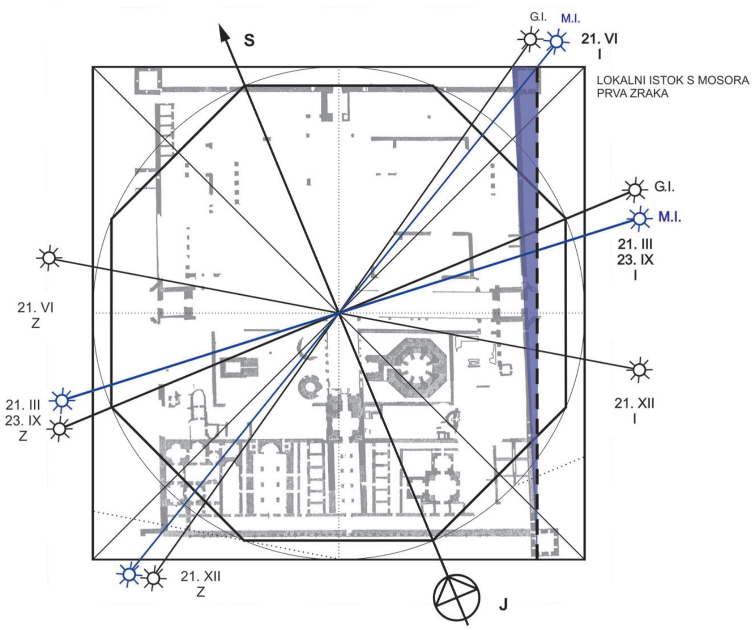
17.2. Central consoles of the lintel (Photo S. Živkov)



17.3. The bust of Sol on the northen side of the temple (Photo S. Živkov)



18.1. Decussis interpreted by Mladen Pejaković (courtesy of Josipa Pejaković and Jagor Bučan)



18.2. Projection of an octagon on the plan of Diocletian's palace (courtesy of Josipa Pejaković and Jagor Bučan)



19.1. Medallion with Hermes Psychopompos, north side of the frieze, Temple of Jupiter – Jovius (Nenad Gattin)



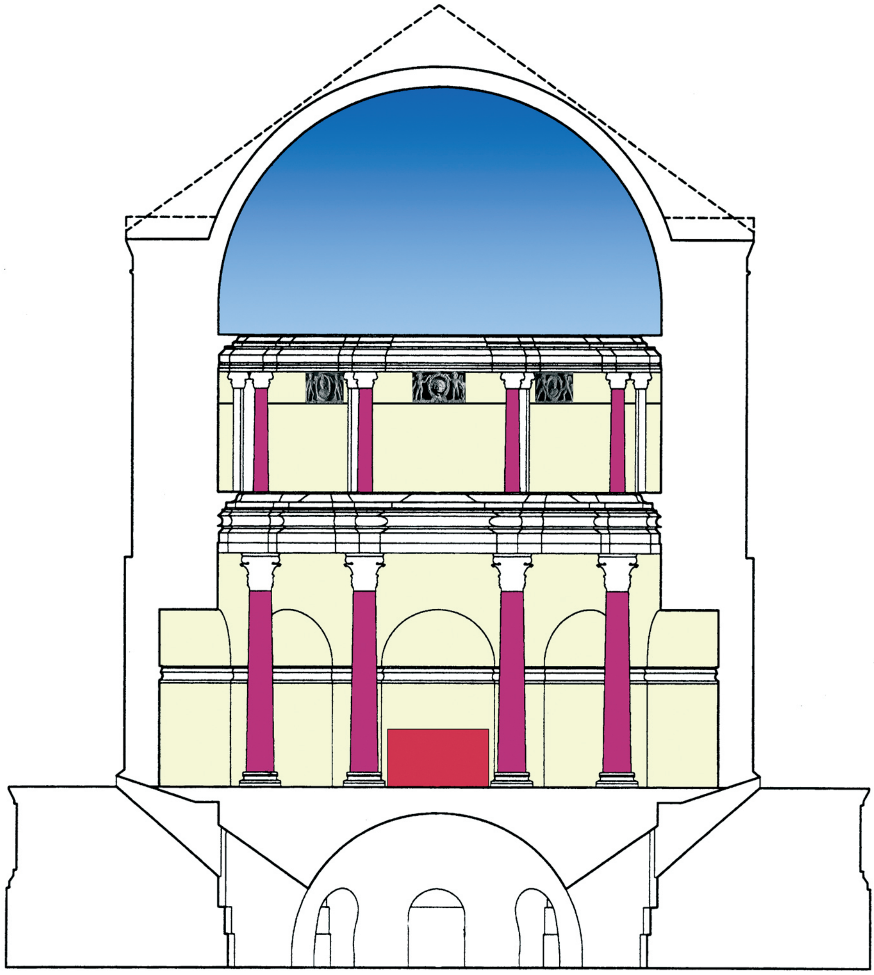
19.2. Medallion with the portrait of Prisca, north east side of the frieze, Temple of Jupiter – Jovius (Nenad Gattin)



20.1. Medallion with Sol Invictus, east side of the frieze, Temple of Jupiter – Jovius, proposed reconstruction (S. Živkov & N. Vujić)



20.2. Medallion with the portrait of Diocletian, south-east side of the frieze, Temple of Jupiter – Jovius (Nenad Gatin)



21.1. The cross section of the temple of Jupiter – Jovius. Symbolic apotheosis of Diocletian (S. Živkov & N. Vujić)



22.1. The apotheosis of Titus, vault of Titus' arch, Rome



22.2. Constantine in quadriga of Helios, relief on Constantine's arch



23.1. Apotheosis of Julian the Apostate and Helena Flavia, Grand Camee de Roumanie, Numismatic collection of the Academy, Bucharest



23.2. Apotheosis of Julian the Apostate and Helena Flavia, Berlin, Staatliche Museum



24.1. Sol Invictus, Tauroctonia relief (detail), Mithraeum in Circus Maximus, Rome